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ABSTRACT

This paper establishes a classification for the different types of ephemeral publications that are common in museums (e.g., educational, commercial, internal). To this purpose, it sets forth an elementary system of automated technical treatment that provides a secure system for storage, retrieval, and diffusion of this data by using MARC format in those libraries having normalized systems or Microsoft Access databases in other libraries. Topics discussed include: (1) definition and importance of ephemeral material; (2) keeping and custody of ephemeral material; (3) typology and characteristics according to format, function, and contents; (4) users of ephemeral material; (5) the situation in Spanish museum libraries; (6) a proposal for cataloging in MARC format; and (7) a proposal for an Access database. Appendices include examples of cataloging in MARC format and Access and a classification schedule. (Contains 12 references.) (MES)

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Are the last exhibitions brochures available? Problems and solutions for a neglected material in museum libraries

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Paper

Every museum generates a considerable amount of printed and graphic ephemeral material, which provides first-hand information on their permanent exhibitions and their temporary activities (exhibition brochures, didactic material, activity announcements, cards, etc). Frequently these data are the only source of direct information on the active life of the organism precisely reflecting their public image. However, there are but a few the museums devoting a certain effort to preserve this material and their custody is not always guaranteed. This paper intends to establish a classification of the different types of ephemeral publications, which are common in Museums (informative, educational, commercial, of internal use, etc). To this purpose, it sets forth an elementary system of automated technical treatment which, by using the MARC format (in those libraries having normalized systems) or database in ACCESS (for those ones lacking of them), a secure system for storage, retrieval and diffusion of this data can be established.

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Definition and importance of ephemeral material

According to the *Encyclopedia of Library and Information Science*[1] "every librarian bears a different concept of the ephemeral material". And while assuring that is acquisition does not usually presents any problem, it points out, nonetheless, on the many questions that the technical treatment brings forth, for the most part derived, in fact, from the diverse ways of approaching it. On the other hand, the *Glosario ALA de bibliotecología y ciencias de la información*[2] defines "Ephemeral material" like that "having transitory value and interest, usually consisting of brochures and clippings which are kept in vertical files for limited periods of time". Although inadequate and restrictive, since it does not bear in mind other material such as graphics, audiovisuals or electronics, this definition may be well considered as the starting point.

Most part of the ephemeral material is generated by institutions, usually aimed to promotional ends, as it will be seen further on. Museums, regardless of their type and dimension, are not an exception.

In a society where information is one of the highest values, these documents have an increasing importance because of the following:

- Quite often they are the only available information on certain events, such as temporary activities (lectures, concerts, etc) or exhibitions without catalogue (mainly of contemporary art).
- They are basic tools in reconstructing the institution history, being a compliment of the material kept in files.
- They reflect the public image of the museum and consequently they constitute the graphic evidence of its evolution along the years.
- They are the documents reaching a broad diffusion because of their generally large printing and free of charge circulation.
- They appeal to every type of people, regardless of their age, interests and social status.

Keeping and custody of ephemeral material

Once the ephemeral material has been defined and its relevant function accepted, the responsibility of its gathering, custody, management and diffusion should be set forth. In Spain most of these documents are not systematically submitted to legal control (NIPO, ISBN, Legal Deposit, etc.) as they are considered of internal and not salable use which favors their dissemination and lost. When this material is produced by the museum, the problem arises in the interior of the institution itself, being not clear whose department should bear this responsibility: historical archives, diffusion or scientific departments, libraries and even material storage have been taking care of it. This is an important matter, since the management system to be used will depend on the unit in which is in custody.

No doubt libraries are the ones to offer the best advantages to assure the proper documentary treatment and to make easier the retrieval, exchange and diffusion of the information. They count on normalized and technically advanced means for documentary management; having the ephemeral material together with other bibliographical documents facilitates their common and complementary use, and

being the library less restrictive than other units in the museum, people of every type are guaranteed the access to the information.

Typology and characteristics

The next matter to be considered is the classification of ephemeral material. Obviously many diverse criteria can be call in to establish its typology, bearing mainly in mind the ends to be met. In this paper three documentary categories corresponding to the format, function and contents of the documents criteria have been selected. Thus, an orientation map of an exhibition will accomplish format (brochure), contents (map) and function (didactic material). The proposed classification only tries to give an example; every institution will have to develop it own system, according to that is required. It is intended to be conveniently flexible as to allow adaptation while being strict enough to avoid confusion and duplication. At the end of this paper a brief classification schedule, properly codified, is attached, intending to be a clue for these documents treatment.

According to format

- Textual: documents where most part of the information is reported by texts (brochures, loose sheets). They usually offer precise, relevant and in detail information, which are periodically published: meeting announcements, activity bulletins, etc. Frequently they are the only ephemeral material granted the privilege of being kept and treated.

- Graphic: documents whose information consists mostly of images (maps, cards, slides, posters, calendars, bookmarks[3] , etc). Together with the textual format, this is the material most frequently produced by the museum activities, usually being information sources that cannot be disregarded even if its documentary treatment has been neglected.

- Audiovisual: consisting of documents with fixed or moving images plus sound (didactic videos, slides, records, etc). For many years audiovisual documents have an important place in museum libraries, bearing special interest in carrying out projects of didactic or divulging type because of its capacity to communicate.

- Electronic: documents, regardless of their contents, with digital or electronic support. As a matter of fact, they share the characteristics of the former items, though they are easier to handle and to be moved and allow interactivity with the user. This type of documents compiles from web pages to CD-ROM and DVD. Their documentary treatment as keeping and access have their own characteristics not devoid of problems.

- Web sites. Practically all the documents mentioned so far could appear in Internet through the museum web page and therefore, the need to keep and manage this new class of documents has to be considered too. We are not to discuss here the different ways of cataloguing this new type of material, a matter of current interest in most international forums. However, the need to keep it and make it available should be emphasized, maintaining the type of support to make it accessible while keeping all the characteristics (sounds, surfing, links, applets, etc). Accordingly, two conditions ought to be considered, no matter the rules being followed in its documentary treatment: 1) to make a copy of the museum web page every time modifications are made (or at least to keep evidence of such modifications).

and 2) the copy should be made in a support allowing access to it really (CD-ROM, videotape, etc.). Summarizing, one should bear in mind that to keep the integrity of a document, its physical characteristics and contains have to be preserved.

According to the function

- General informative documents, offering any type of information on the museum: events, exhibitions, circulating visits, collections, and so on. Guidebooks, catalogues, timetable leaflets, maps, etc. are included in this group.
- Didactic documents having educational features, either by themselves or because of the activities implied: didactic pages, cuttings, game cases, etc.
- Commercial documents aimed to obtain material profit and used, therefore, for sale or exchange. A real or virtual shop is then required, usually displaying a large variety in shape.
- Advertising documents: those to make the museum broadly known and to encourage new clients (visitants or proxy or remote customers), calendars, bookmarks, posters, etc.
- Documents related to direct communication with customers or procedures to be followed for the same, such as forms, inquiring ones, letters, and so on. Even if this system is not very widely used, it tends to increase because of the possibilities it gives the museum to find out the requirements of its public.

According to the contents

- Collections. Documents with information on the museum assets, either temporary or permanent, being exhibited or not.
- Activities. Documents about the events taking place in the museum, of diverse characteristics: research, diffusion, commercial or professional (conferences, seminars, etc.)
- Documents with information generated outside the museum. Some times the museum might be interested in data it has not produced itself: Museums World Day, pieces related to its collections, courses, lectures, etc. They are complementary information.

Who do ephemeral material interest to?

Ephemeral or minor documents are characterized, among other things, by having two life periods, well-differentiated one from the other; the tag group being qualitative and quantitative different. The first period -active life- has a defined and short in time task: to provide information on one activity, to supply documents for an exhibition, to guide visits or to announce a determinate event. In this period, the objective public is broad and not determinate, without matching a fix profile: printing circulation is large, aimed to big and not defined populations. Only some determinate documents are addressed to a specific public. They will receive the information discriminatorily, the only requirement to make a proper utilization is that the said information is active.

The second life period begins when active life ends. On this stage, interested

public is more restrictive, but much more specific. Historians, sociologists, curators, artists and researches will be more interested in having access to information gathered in ephemeral material, at times as a complementary source, others as the main source, and quite often as the only source of information. In this case, the access to information will be selective and precise and therefore it is important the every document will be identified, described and showing points of access to allow its retrieval. Here lies the importance of their being correctly treated.

Situation in the Spanish museums libraries

In the preliminary period of this work, we have carried out a brief inquire among the main libraries of Spanish museums with regard to the treatment applied to these materials. We have addressed four libraries in Madrid and eight others in different towns. In conclusion we were able to observe that scarce attention was given to ephemeral material, both graphic as textual, suggesting that few museums systematically gather those documents and even less, process them properly.

When the data produced by the museum itself it not kept in the library (as it happens in the *Museo Thyssen* and the *Centro de Arte Reina Sofia*, both in Madrid) the material is scattered on diverse departments (publications files, documentary services, etc), resulting in a difficult access to it.

On the other hand, when the museum library is the one to takes care of this material, its control and diffusion is much more satisfactory. This is the case, for example, of the *Museo del Prado*, where the brochures, both those from other institutions as well as the generated by the museum itself are included in the book database with a *currens* signature in boxes. Posters also were kept and processed in database up to 1994.

Other institutions are in favor of keeping all the documents produced by an exhibition. *The Museu Nacional d´Art de Catalunya* (Barcelona) do this; its library processes only the material having periodicity, which receives treatment of periodical publication. The remaining publications produced by the exhibitions (triptychs, posters and cards, press dossiers and so on) are kept and organized in vertical files and not catalogued. This sort of material receives similar treatment in the *Fundación Miró* (Barcelona). The processing in MARC format of this documentation, as performed by other institutions like the National Gallery of Canada might be interesting.[4]

A proposal for cataloguing in MARC format

Up to this point, to emphasize the importance of the MARC (*Machine Readable Cataloguing*) as the main bibliographic format of interchange does not seem to be necessary. Because of its complexity plus its flexibility, the process allows describing the most diverse materials together with the elaboration of records with a varied level of description. MARC allows describing textual and graphic materials, individual documents and big sets of information, and all this by using a common scheme.

The use of the MARC format to describe ephemeral material produced by the museum itself has undoubted advantages. It allows the joint recovery of the remaining documents of the library, as well as records interchange among other centers. Several examples of textual and graphic materials catalogued following the peculiar uses of the IBERMARC (Spanish version of the MARC format) in

the National Library are reported in the Appendix.

In general it seems enough to include: a field 1XX with the main entry (110 for the museum or 111 for standard exhibition headings), a field 245 for the title, a 260 for the essential publication dates, a brief physical description in 300, notes fields for some special characteristics, some 6XX field (600 for individual artist exhibitions, 650 for subject headings or 653 for index terms) and finally, leaving aside the codified fields, the 7XX fields necessaries for completing the entries.

A proposal for database in ACCCESS

The database included at the end of the paper has been elaborated in ACCESS for Windows. It offers the possibility of carrying out a simple cataloguing of ephemeral materials in those small and medium libraries devoid of a library management with MARC format. The objective of this database is double: to assure the control of ephemeral documents and to simplify their treatment.

The database has been structured in one main heading and three units: 1) description, allowing identification of the document (size, publication, notes, etc.); 2) secondary headings (on subjects, people and entities), and 3) classification (form, contain and function). The latter is complimented through open menus, reflecting contents and structure of the classification pattern.

The management and care of the database is quite simple, only requiring basic knowledge of computers and cataloguing. Once installed, any member of the museum auxiliary personnel can easily take it.

Summary

The development of communication webs, Internet ahead, has increased the ephemeral character of all sort of documentation, at the same time that the volume of ephemeral material becomes significant. Thus, the management of this type of material, at a moment when boundaries between the ephemeral and the permanent are more imprecise than ever, becomes of current importance.

To solve a problem that has been present for long is more difficult, somehow: what is to be the institution to control it?. The large national centers (National Archives and Libraries) are overwhelmed by the massive input of all sort of documents, while only a few countries have National Art Libraries (Great Britain, France...) The responsibility of coping with this sort of material cannot be ascribed to them.

Notwithstanding its management cannot result in a waste of the scarce means of museum libraries and therefore the proposed cataloguing system are intended to be on hand for any library, without neglect the minimal description to assure its identification and the suitable links of access for its recovery.

In summary we believe that each museum should be responsible for the keeping, control and diffusion of the ephemeral material it produces and that, within the same institution, the library is to be the one in charge of the documentary management, being the most suitable for it. Only in small towns or regions, with few centres producing a short amount of documentary material could be placed on one of them the task of keeping and controlling the documents.

Notes

1. KENT, A; LANCOUR, H. ed. *Encyclopedia of Library and Information Science*. New York, Marcel Dekker, 1972, vol 8, p. 131-133

2. *Glosario ALA de bibliotecología y ciencias de la información*, Heartsill Young ed., Madrid, Díaz de Santos, 1988, p.87

3. Ejemplos de las posibilidades informativas de los puntos de lectura en "The best in bookmarks: art and information in a traditional format", en *Art documentation: bulletin of the Art Libraries Society of North America*, vol. 18, nº 2, 1999, pp. 22-27.

4. CAMPBELL, C; WEBB, H.; BEGLO, J. "Keeping it all together: National Gallery of Canada exhibition records and other exhibition-related materials". *Art Documentation*, vol. 17, nº 2, 1998, pp. 46-50.

ANNEXES

1. EXAMPLES OF CATALOGUING BOTH IN MARC FORMAT AND IN ACCESS

A) BROCHURE: New exhibition galleries

MARC				ACCESS
Field	Indicators	Subfield codes	Description	
001			BNE20000808129	
005			20000324175 2RBAJDC BNER	
008			000324s1999 esp| ill ||||spa|	
040		$a	280790025 M-BN	
		$b	SPA spa	
		$c	280790025 M-BN	
110	20	$a	Museo del Prado	
		$t	Pintura italiana del renacimiento	
245	10	$a	Pintura italiana del renacimiento	
		$b	siglos XVI-XVII	
260	0	$a	Madrid	
		$b	Museo Nacional del Prado	
		$c	1999	
300		$a	1 desplegable	
		$b	il	
		$c	21 cm	
650	08	$a	Pintura italiana	
		$y	S.XIV-XVI	
		$z	Museo del Prado	

Museo del Prado. Pintura italiana del Renacimiento
Pintura italiana del Renacimiento. Madrid, 19991. Desplegable; il. 21 cm.

Pintura italiana
S. XV-XVI
Museo del Prado

C.1.2. Dípticos, trípticos y desplegables
A.2.3. Catálogos de exposiciones temporales
B.1.2. Información sobre exposiciones temporales

B) PERIODICAL: News bulletin

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MARC				ACCESS
Field	Subfield codes	Indicators	Description	
001			BNE20000006297	
005			20000324182\6RBAJDC BNER	
008			008 000224c1993 esplyyp 0uuu 0spa d	
019		$z	BNR06232	
040		$a	M-BN	
		$b	spa	
		$c	M-BN	
130	00	$a	Actividades	
245	00	$a	Actividades	
		$c	Museo Arqueológico Nacional	
260	0	$a	Madrid	
		$b	MAN	
		$c	1998	
300		$a	v	
		$c	24 cm	
310	0	$a	Trimestral	
362	0	$a	N.1 (1998)	
708	21	$a	Museo Arqueológico Nacional (España)	

Actividades
Actividades. Museo Arqueológico Nacional. Madrid, 1998. v. 24 cm.
Publicación trimestral

C.1.1. Folletos
A.1.3. Guías
B.2.2. Actividades de difusión

C) PROJECTED GRAPHIC MATERIAL : Slides collection

MARC				ACCESS
Field	Indicators	Subfield codes	Description	
001			BNE19950000099	
005			19951113084\5RBAJDC BNER	
006		$a	N	
		$b	M	
007			gsoczffe	
008			950322s1988 esp gm s /|	
019		$a	O.2417-1988	
020		$a	84-505-1415-0	
040		$c	M-BN	
110	20	$a	Museo Arqueológico de Asturias	
		$t	Museo Arqueológico, Oviedo	
245	00	$a	Museo Arqueológico, Oviedo	
		$c	[texto, Matilde Escortell fotos, Joaquín Montes y Angel Ricardo	
250		$a	[2ª ed.]	
260	0	$a	[Oviedo	
		$b	Servicio de Publicaciones del Principado de Asturias]	
		$c	D.L. 1988	
300		$a	72 diapositivas	
		$b	Col.	
		$c	5 x 5 cm.	
		$e	26 p. de texto	
505	1	$a	[1.] Prehistoria	
594	1	$a	Precede al tit.: Principado de Asturias. Consejería de Educación, Cultura y Deportes	
707	21	$a	Escortell Ponsoda, Matilde	
707	11	$a	Montes, Joaquín	
		$e	Fot.	
707	11	$a	Ricardo, Ángel	
		$e	fot.	

Museo Arqueológico de Asturias
Museo Arqueológico, Oviedo. Oviedo1988
1988. 72 diapositivas, col. 5x5, 26 p. de texto

Prehistoria
C.3.7. Diapositivas
A.2.1. Catálogos de colecciones
B.1.1. Información sobre colecciones

D) NONPROJECTED GRAPHIC MATERIAL: Postcards album

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MARC				ACCESS
Field	Indicators	Subfield codes	Description	
001			BNE19950012249	
005			19951113083434RBAJDC BNER	
007			kh|co|	
008			008 951031s1991	***Goya, Francisco de***
		$c	M-BN	Goya book of 24 postcard Barcelona, 1991 1 album (24 tarjetas postales), col 149x103 mm
100	00	$a	Goya, Francisco de	
		$d	1746-1828	Pintura española S. XVIII-XIX
		$t	Book of 24 postcards	
245	10	$a	Goya	C.2.3. Postales
		$b	: book of 24 postcards . No. 1	A.3.2. Material didáctico para adultos
260	0	$a	Barcelona	B.2.4. Actividades comerciales
		$b	Poligrafa	
		$c	D.L. 1991	
		$f	Librum	
300		$a	1 album (24 tarjetas postales)	
		$b	col	
		$c	149 x 103 mm	
		$e	portada y h. de texto en cuatro idiomas	
655	8	$a	Postales	

2. CLASSIFICATION SCHEDULE

The proposed classification schedule tries to offer a tool for helping in cataloguing the ephemeral material quick and efficiently, simplifying its description. However, it is necessary to take account that each institution will have to make its own schedule, in terms of its needs and objectives.

A. **According to functions**

- *A.1. General information*
  - A.1.1. Immediate information
  - A.1.2. Maps
  - A.1.3. Guides
- *A.2. Catalogues*
  - A.2.1. Collection catalogues
  - A.2.2. Permanent exhibitions catalogues
  - A.2.3. Temporary exhibitions catalogues
  - A.2.4. Other catalogues
- *A.3. Didactic material*
  - A.3.1. Didactic material for children
  - A.3.2. Didactic material for adults
- *A.4. Advertising material*
- *A.5.Commercial materiall*
- *A.6.Documents for direct communication (questionnaires, desiderata, complaint sheets, etc.)*

B. **According to contents**

- *B.1. Information about the collections*
  - B.1.1. Information about the holdings
  - B.1.2. Information about permanent exhibitions
  - B.1.2. Information about temporary exhibitions
- *B.2. Information about the activities*
  - B.2.1. Research activities
  - B.2.2. Diffusion activities
  - B.2.3. Internal activities

B.2.4. Commercial activities
B.2.5. Professional activities: conferences, seminars, etc.
B.3. Others
B.3.1. Information produced outside the museum
B.3.2. Miscellany information

C. **According to format**
C.1. Textual
C.1.1. Brochures
C.1.2. Diptychs, triptychs and folders
C.1.3. Loose sheets
C.2. Graphic material
C.2.1. Plans
C.2.2. Bookmarks
C.2.3. Postcards
C.2.4. Calendars
C.2.5. Posters
C.2.6. Diverse material
C.3.7. Slides
C.2.8. Prints
C.2.9. Photographs
C.3. Audiovisuals
C.3.1. Videotapes
C.3.2. Records
C.3.3. Audio tapes
C.3.4. Films
C.4. Electronics
C.4.1. Diskettes
C.4.2. CD-ROM
C.4.3. Videodiscs
C.4.4. Web-sites

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